

Workshop Report

East Coast Regional

Marine Protected Area Pilot Education Workshop

**November 19-20, 2001
Queenstown, MD**



**Nadine Block
Education Coordinator**

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Introduction

The National Marine Protected Areas (MPA) Center has established an MPA Education Project to increase understanding and awareness of MPAs among coastal educators. At the center of the project is a series of regional workshops targeting marine and coastal educators who regularly provide programming for students, teachers, and the general public.

The pilot Education Workshop was held November 19-20, 2001, at The Aspen Institute's Wye River Conference Center on Maryland's eastern shore. Participants were drawn from federal, state, and local government, private agencies, and academic institutions. The goals of the workshop included the following:

- Increase awareness and understanding of MPA issues, management frameworks, and long-term benefits;
- Promote the inclusion of MPA themes and messages in existing and new marine and coastal education programs;
- Foster development of inter-agency education partnerships; and
- Solicit recommendations for MPA Center support for education.

Approximately 50 attendees from programs between New Hampshire and South Carolina participated. They represented a diverse group of education intermediaries from the following organizations: National Sea Grant College Program; National Estuarine Research Reserves; Department of Interior: National Parks Service and National Wildlife Refuges; National Marine Sanctuaries; aquaria and science centers; and non-governmental organizations. The diverse representation encouraged networking and sharing of activities, programs and materials between the participants, and facilitated exchange of helpful and varied commentary during the entire workshop.

Presentations included the goals and activities of the National MPA Center; the National Academy of Science's report on MPAs, their benefits and limitations; Sea Web's report on American Public attitudes towards MPAs; and Social Science and MPA Management. In a series of breakout sessions, participants shared relevant activities and educational materials from their own programs.

Wye River proved to be an ideal venue: excellent and professional service and accommodations; proximity to one of our highlighted MPAs, the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge; an easy-to-reach location for many of the participants and easy access for day guests from the Washington DC area, including many of the presenters.

It is worthwhile to note that steps were taken to carry out this workshop in a sustainable manner, as befits an MPA-focused event. The handouts were placed in a binder made of recycled materials; the conference center was requested to limit the use of disposables and refrain from Styrofoam all together; energy and water were conserved by limiting linen and towel refreshment; and car-pool transport was provided for arrival and departure.

Summarizing the oral and written evaluations, participants' understanding and awareness of MPA issues, including the MPA Executive Order and the Center's MPA Initiative, increased because of the workshop. In addition, the participants said that what they learned at the workshop would help them to better integrate MPA messages and

themes into their education programs. Finally, valuable recommendations were collected to help the MPA Center further support education efforts.

Presentations

Marine protected areas are increasingly in the news, but many of the participants had only a rudimentary knowledge of the different types of MPAs in the United States or even along the Eastern Seaboard where they work. The presentations were selected to provide a basic working knowledge of MPAs for those educating the public and also provide professional development to other educators about marine issues. The presentations covered natural and social science topics, a review of a survey about public attitudes towards MPAs, and information about the work of the National MPA Center. Experts provided the following presentations:

- **MPAs: Marine Protected Areas, Tools for Sustaining Ocean Ecosystems**, Lisa Wooninck, MPA Center Marine Policy Analyst;
- **American Attitudes Toward Marine Protected Areas and Fully Protected Marine Reserves**, Lisa Dropkin, Sea Web Director of Research;
- **A National Academy Evaluation of MPA Potentials: A Look at Topical Science and Research Efforts**, Susan Roberts, Senior Program Officer Ocean Studies Board of NAS;
- **Bringing Social Science into MPA Management & Education**, Leah Bunce, NOAA Marine Affairs Specialist;
- **National Marine Protected Areas Center**, Joseph Uravitch, Acting MPAC Director; and
- **MPA.GOV Website Presentation**, Joseph Uravitch, Acting MPAC Director.

MPA Programs, Activities and Resources Round Robins

The diversity of the participants was highlighted during the round robins—individual sessions at which the participants became the presenters. Two goals of the workshops are to foster network development among education professionals in the marine protected area community and to promote inclusion of MPA themes in existing educational materials. Many participants brought activities and educational materials to share with the group. The following activities and materials were presented:

- **Immersing the public in MPAs using live video**, Mystic Aquarium
- **Recreational anglers & local MPA issues**, New York Sea Grant
- **Ocean Wilderness**, The Ocean Conservancy
- **Green Eggs and Sand: Tri-State shorebird/horseshoe crab education project**, Delaware National Estuarine Research Reserve
- **Using MARE for interdisciplinary, hands-on classroom learning about marine environments**, Jaques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve
- **Concepts for new MPA education initiatives**, Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary
- **“Estuary Live” NERR Education**, North Carolina National Estuarine Research Reserve
- **Blackwater NWR & the migration of Canada Geese**, Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge
- **Marine Biodiversity Curriculum**, World Wildlife Fund
- **A Whaling Story: Cultural Connections**, Cape Cod National Seashore

- **Stuff Fish**, Hudson River Sloop Clearwater
- **Sea Changes: the New England fishing industry**, Rhode Island Geography Alliance

Break-Out Sessions

Individual break-out sessions were held where the workshop participants broke into small discussion groups. The following topics were suggested, followed by a summary of the group discussions.

What are or could be the benefits of having MPA messages and themes as part of your programs, activities and resources?

The most commonly identified benefit to using MPA messages and themes was to establish an overarching context for encouraging diverse audiences to connect with marine and coastal systems on social, economic, scientific and personal levels. In addition, the MPA initiative was viewed as exciting new information and a way to locally address a global issue while promoting public stewardship. The MPA framework also presents opportunities for interdisciplinary education and outreach and for meeting educational standards.

What are the constraints to integrating or using MPA messages and themes as part of your programs, activities and resources?

The foremost constraint to integrating or using MPA messages and themes was the lack of a unified vocabulary and terminology. The lack of a prepared and widely available packaged education program, information, and specific resources on MPAs also presents a hurdle to integration.

Brainstorm ideas and strategies for integrating MPA messages and themes in your work. Include comments on adjusting existing programs as appropriate.

Ideas and strategies for integrating MPA messages and themes were plentiful, and included:

using existing material and simply incorporating MPA terms into current programs; links to MPA.gov for materials; creation of MPA specific activities, programs and curricula; and getting articles and information into periodicals, trade journals and textbooks.

List specific needs you might have in order to integrate MPA messages and themes in your programs, activities and resources.

Overwhelmingly, the participants stated that there is a need for refinement of MPA themes and messages, clear and appropriate definitions, and well-defined benefits of MPAs along with supporting research. Additionally, the lack of suitable assessment tools for MPA education was noted. Following these refinements, participants noted that production of a standardized package of information on MPAs would be very useful; it might include a PowerPoint presentation or overheads and slides, along with other supporting materials.

Evaluations and Feedback

The workshop served to increase participants' understanding and awareness of MPA issues, management contexts and inclusion of messages and themes into programs. Feedback indicated that most attendees felt the material was useful, presented in clear and understandable ways, relevant to their jobs, and appropriately timed. On the evaluations, many participants added notes lauding the selection and diversity of the

individuals present and were appreciative of the networking and information gathering made possible by the diverse crowd. Attached is a summary chart of the evaluations.

The round robins provided the impetus for many comments; overall, most people appreciated the time devoted to exposure of other programs, materials and activities and some wanted more time and repeated offerings. However, as befits a diverse group such as this, a few individuals indicated they could have done without the round robins all together!

In addition, several people commented positively on the time spent on the National MPA Center, and the MPA Executive Order, while a couple of individuals thought there was too much of our short program dedicated to those topics.

Participant Recommendations

The evaluations provided additional recommendations in addition to those elicited from the round robins. They include:

- Providing background materials before the workshop;
- Having more MPA-based education activities and program examples;
- Conducting regional workshops;
- Indication and/or separation of formal and standards-based education activities from the non-formal outreach activities;
- Moving the round robin sessions earlier or ending the program earlier, so as not to lose people for this critical part of the workshop;
- Have the National MPA Center host a mailing list for educators.

Most exciting, the majority of participants indicated that they picked up specific information that could be applied directly to their work. This included resources, contact information, and overarching concepts for framing the work they do. They also learned basic MPA information including terminology and possible impacts of MPAs on the fishing community and local environment.

Review of Prototype MPA Education Poster

Workshop participants were offered the opportunity to review and suggest improvements to the prototype MPA education poster. The poster, incorporating seven cartoons donated by Jim Toomey, creator of *Sherman's Lagoon*®, provides examples of seven different types of MPAs. Several recommendations were provided including providing additional information about each site, clarifying how to access additional information, changing the color scheme, improved titling, and clarifying that there are seven examples of MPAs, not all the MPAs in the United States.

Recommendations for Follow-up Contact with Participants

Follow-up with participants is key to spreading the messages from the workshop to a broader audience. In particular, the following actions are recommended:

- Provide the participants with the Workshop Summary;
- Provide participants with access to the main presentations, possibly in video format;
- Send up-to-date information about refinement of terminology, MPA science, and the National MPA Center;

- Send materials designed for education and outreach post-workshop (e.g. the MPA poster designed by Jim Toomey);
- Inform all participants if a network of MPA Educators is established by the Center; and
- Offer access to Center services and workshops when appropriate.

In addition, it was noted that these initial participants could provide valuable suggestions for contact information for future regional workshops.

Recommendations for Future Workshops

Among the lessons learned from this pilot workshop are recommendations for the future MPA Education Workshops. There are education intermediaries who have little or no knowledge about MPAs, although they are actively involved in what could be termed MPA education. Presentations for future workshops need to consider this; the presentations should allow ample time for discussion. It would also be very useful for the participants who are interested in replicating MPA programs at home to be able to bring home with them a basic PowerPoint presentation, script, and talking points along with definitions for MPA terms.

Among the benefits of holding the regional workshops are tailoring the presentations to the locale and introducing the regional educators to appropriate local resource people. As the status and work of MPAs grows nationally, it will become easier to identify local resources. Additionally, travel costs are reduced with regional gatherings. A recommendation would be to hold workshops on the West Coast and Great Lakes in 2002, followed by the Gulf of Mexico and other regions.

Evaluation Summary

In a summary of paired, usable responses, it was overwhelming seen that the participants benefited from the information presented at the workshop.

	No Knowledge 1	Little Knowledge 2	Sufficient Knowledge 3	Extensive Knowledge 4
Understanding and awareness of MPA issues, the MPA Executive Order and MPA Initiative	Average changed from 1.9 before to 3.3 after the Workshop			
Understanding and awareness of MPA management contexts and topical science	Average changed from 1.8 before to 3.9 after the Workshop			
Inclusion of MPA messages and themes in programs, activities and resources	Average changed from 2.0 before to 3.3 after the Workshop			
Understanding of public opinion and MPA issues	Average changed from 1.7 before to 3.2 after the Workshop			
How to include MPA messages and themes in existing/new marine and coastal education programs	Average changed from 2.1 before to 3.3 after the Workshop			

List of Presenters & Workshop Organizers

Name	Affiliation
Beth Day	NOAA Sea Grant
Emily Lindow	NOAA Legislative Affairs
Joseph Uravitch	NOAA/NOS MPA Center
Kate Barba	NOAA/NOS
Leah Bunce	NOAA/NOS
Linda Taylor	NOAA/NOS
Lisa Woonick	NOAA/NOS
Lisa Dropkin	SeaWeb
Nadine Bloch	NOAA/NOS
Sarah Mitchell	NOAA/NOS
Susan Roberts	National Research Council

List of Participants

Name	Affiliation
Adam Frederick	Maryland Sea Grant
Alyssa Beckwith	Liberty Science Center
Andrew Larkin	NOAA Legislative Affairs
Anne Smrcina	Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary
Antoinette Clemetson	New York Sea Grant
Barbara Sayre	Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Barbara Dougan	Cape Cod National Seashore
Betty Olivolo	World Wildlife Fund
Diana Payne	Connecticut Sea Grant & The Maritime Aquarium @ Norwalk
Eric Simms	Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve
Gretchen Knapp	Assateague Island National Seashore
Jennifer Ise	NOAA/Estuarine Research Division
Joan Muller	Massachusetts National Estuarine Research Reserve
Julia Hathaway	Ocean Conservancy
Kate Naughten	NOAA/National Marine Fisheries Service
Kathi Rodrigues	National Marine Fisheries Service
Katy Dulin	Delaware National Estuarine Research Reserve
Laurie McDonough	Immersion Institute
Linda Richards	Clearwater
Lucille Harrell	US Fish and Wildlife Service
Lundie Spence	North Carolina Sea Grant
Maggie Briggs	Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge
Maureen Spaight	Rhode Island Geographic Education Alliance
Rebecca Boger	GLOBE
Russel Heyde	University of Maryland
Sandy Burke	CBF-Living Classrooms
Sarah Schoedinger	CORE
Seaberry Nachbar	NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office
Shannon Crownover	SeaWeb
Stefanie Comastro	Maryland Science Center
Stephen Finn	Fire Island National Seashore
Susan Haynes	Virginia Sea Grant
Susan Lovelace	North Carolina National Estuarine Research Reserve
Vicki Paris	Ocean Conservancy
Vicki Clark	Virginia Sea Grant
Whit McMillan	South Carolina Aquarium